

Saw (whip saw) owned by T Linco

Drawer 29a

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Curios and Relics
Tools
Whipsaw
Owned by Thomas Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Subscribed by J. Lee Powell
COUNTY OF JEFFERSON) .
STATE OF KENTUCKY)

Joseph LEE POWELL, being first duly sworn by me deposes and states as follows:

That his name is Joseph Lee Powell, age eighty-two years, and that he lives in Larue County, Kentucky, near Hodgenville, on Rural Route No. 2 and is the son of Peter R. Powell, now deceased.

Affiant further states that Abraham Lincoln gave to his father a certain whip saw, which was used for sawing lumber by man power in the year of 1817 or 1818, at the time the Lincoln family moved from Kentucky to Indiana and that the saw remained in affiants family ever since.

The affiant further states that the saw was a very valuable tool and the only one of its kind in the community known to his father; that since it was his fathers custom to so mark his tools with a secret mark, the saw was marked with three notches filed about twelve inches from the big end of the saw and on the back thereof, representing his initials "P. R. P." and that also the same initials were indented with a punch on the big end of the saw.

The affiant states the saw presented to him at the time of this affidavit is the saw, to his personal knowledge, that was given to his father and Austin Gollaher, for their heroic deed in saving his life from the treacherous waters of the Rolling Fork River, just a short time before leaving Kentucky, by Abraham Lincoln himself, even though he was only eight or nine years of age, and affiants father was only ten or eleven years of age; that Abraham Lincoln's father Thomas Lincoln, who valued the saw very much gave it to Abraham for that purpose and as a token of appreciation for their services.

The affiant further states that while he is now eighty-two years of age, he still has all his faculties and is of sound memory; that realizing he has but a short time in which to live he would have no motive for making a false statement and that, therefore, the foregoing statements are true, having had personal knowledge, since he was large enough to remember, of the saw and his fathers solemn narrative of above stated facts.

I, Cecil Bell, a notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, hereby certify that the foregoing affidavit of Joseph Lee Powell, was taken by me this April 1, 1929.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL This April 1, 1929.

My COMMISSION EXPIRES

Copy



May the 12th 1931.

Mrs E. L. Barry, kind
Sir in Request, that I
send you 6 of these
Photographs. I had them
made the first opportunity
and say they are not
very good ones, but the
best I can do at Present
they are very much
like the fair, if they
are not the plain. They
cost me \$5.00 but I am
not at pay for them
they are so bad and
dim. Now this fair is
a hard 8. feet long and
8. inches wide at big end
and 5 inches at little end

I have a affidavit
 of the same that
 if you so wish I
 will send you a
 copy of it. I am now
 60. years old and have
 heard and known of
 this same all my life
 and there is quite a
 story running with it
 when this same fell in
 my hands, I taken it
 to Hodgenville and
 had an old man make
 a sworn statement to
 it. Being the original
 Thomas Lincoln same
 man I have the
 same and I would

like to sell it, as
 I am getting old and
 my husband is old
 don't have work to do
 as he is working for
 the Gen. R. R. Co. so I
 will be very thankful, if
 you could give me any
 information, on selling
 it. so if you wish I
 will send you the copy
 of affidavit. so let
 me hear from you
 soon. Yours truly
 Mrs. J. L. Meredith
 311. Huron Street
 Louisville Ky.

Meredith
70

June 11 - 1931

Lancaster, Pa.

Dr. David H. [unclear]

Kind Sir, I have been
advised to write you
concerning and old
Lincoln Bible. I have
which is a superb one
that once belonged to
Lincoln's Father and
passed on to which
he gave to little son to
give I of his little boy
friends an moving a
way from Kentucky.
When he moved to
Pa. - There are the two
little Bibles that I own
his life when he was

I am writing you a letter
 to let you know that
 I have my fork
 knives, and two pieces
 of these two boys. That
 we appreciated their
 of them, the same then,
 they were. And I am
 sending you one of
 each kind of Photos, and
 a copy of the affidavit
 and you may keep these
 Photos and a copy of your
 will. Their has been some
 desert people here to
 see the same. They have
 not one with the price as
 it is not so valuable to
 price it. But I am getting

I
old sand pit. Like I
would have been told
it and the fact that
it was some place like
it would be taken care
of. I have written out
the story of it, as far
as I know since it
has been found that it was
lost for a long time
and was in the river.
My friend went down in
a drift boat to look the
River down which
was found at the
River was supposed to
wash a way during a
big rise in water. I
do I hope to

4



Louisville, Ky., Feb. 12—(AP Wirephoto)—The Saw Given to Lincoln's Rescuer—James L. Meredith exhibiting a nine foot whip saw said to have been given by the Emancipator's father to a neighbor for helping save little Abe from drowning one day before the family moved to Indiana.

Phila Bulletin 2-12-56

Whipsaw's Fate Made Rail Splitter of Lincoln

Family's Log-Ripping Tool Given Away As Reward When "Little Abe" Saved From River

By John L. Newman.

THE possibility that Abraham Lincoln would more properly be known as the whipsawyer President than the rail-splitter is suggested by an antique saw, owned by Mrs. James L. Meredith, 311 Huron, who claims it was once the property of the Lincoln family. Mrs. Meredith's history of the whipsaw, if accurate, indicates that young Abe might have worked his timbers with the saw as well as with ax and adz.

On the other hand, since the saw is said to have passed from the Lincolns' possession when the future President was but 8 years old, and perhaps was not replaced, its subtraction from the family's household gear may have been largely responsible for the youthful Lincoln's rail-splitting training.

The saw is of exceptional antiquarian and historical interest because, Mrs. Meredith says, of its connection with an incident of vital importance in London's early childhood.

It was, she explains, presented as a reward by his father, Thomas, to a neighbor, Peter R. Powell, who, with one Austin Gallaher, saved little Abe from drowning in the turbulent waters of Rolling Fork Creek shortly before the family moved to Indiana.

Lost for more than half a century, the nine-foot steel saw, deeply rusted, was recovered from the bed of the Nolin River at the Hart County-Grayson County line in 1926 by a swimmer, George Logsdon. Hearing that Mrs. Meredith's brother, T. N. Smith, Grayson County, was familiar



—(By Times Staff Photographer.)

Assisted in spirit at least by his dog, James L. Meredith, 311 Huron, shows in this pose the proper way to sight preparatory to ripping timber with the once Lincoln-owned nine-foot whipsaw given away as a reward when little Abe was rescued from drowning.

with the history of the ancient tool, Mr. Logsdon gave it to him and he presented it to Mrs. Meredith.

Mr. Smith heard the story of the saw in his early childhood

from the late Mr. Powell, he states in an affidavit. The story is confirmed and the authenticity of the relic attested in an affidavit by Joseph Lee Powell of Hodgenville, son of Lincoln's rescuer.

Details of the rescue are not known but the deep gratitude of the Lincoln family appears evident since the saw was said to be the only one of its kind in the community at a time when tools of

any sort were extremely rare. It was presented to the elder Powell, then 11, by young Abraham himself, acting on his father's instructions, Mr. Powell testifies.

Prizing it highly, the recipient marked it as was his custom with three filed notches on the back of the blade approximately one foot from the handle, the son recalls. These are still clearly visible and greatly enlarged by the erosion resulting from long exposure, he adds. The saw was also marked, he says, with his father's initials, P. R. P., inscribed with a punch on the flat of the blade. Although these are not legible, Mrs. Meredith believes that some sort of chemical treatment might bring them to light.

* * *

Remarking that some historians hold that Dennis Hanks, a cousin of the Lincolns, and the Gallaher lad, saved little Abe from the river, Mr. Powell insists that this is an error and that his father performed the part attributed to Hanks.

The floors of the ancestral home in the Horse Shoe Bend of the Nolin River are made of boards believed to have been cut by the Lincoln saw.

The saw is now kept in a specially fitted case at the Meredith home where many historians, collectors and sightseers have inspected it in the last few years, the owner says, inviting all others who are interested.

